

REMARKS

By the present amendment, claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 15 are pending in the application.

Support For Claim Amendments

Claim 1

In claim 1, the amounts of Ti and/or Nb are supported by prior dependent claim 2.

In claim 1, the phrase --without substantially containing retained austenite-- is supported in the specification, e.g., at page 10, lines 12-13.

Claim 2

In dependent claim 2, the amounts of Ti and/or Nb have been deleted and placed in currently amended independent claim 1.

Claim 10

New dependent claim 10 is based on dependent claim 4.

Claims 11 & 12

New dependent claims 11 and 12 are based on dependent claim 6.

Claims 13, 14 & 15

New dependent claims 13, 14 and 15 are based on dependent claim 7.

Restriction Requirement

Applicants hereby affirm the election of the claims of Group I, i.e., claims 1 to 7 for further prosecution in this application. This election is made without prejudice to the filing of a divisional application directed to the withdrawn, non-elected claims.

New dependent claims 10 to 15 of the present amendment correspond to elected dependent claims.

Note that withdrawn dependent claims 8 and 9 are dependent upon independent claim 1.

§102/§103

Claims 1 to 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the computer English translation of Japan No. 2001-234281 (JP '281).

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the computer English translation of Japan No. 2000-345288 (JP '288).

Claims 3 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '288 in view of JP '281.

These rejections, as applied to the amended claims, are respectfully traversed.

Patentability

JP 2001-234281 ('281 patent)

The technology disclosed in the '281 patent relates to a high strength, thin steel sheet containing Co and which is excellent in adhesion for galvanizing and formability. A characteristic feature of the '281 patent is that it contains Co: 0.005 - 2.0% for increasing C concentration in austenite and contains retained austenite of more than 0.9%.

On the other hand, the present invention has the object to provide formability, chemical converted coating treatment and hot-dip galvanizing without containing retained austenite. Therefore, the steel sheet compositions and the structure according to the present invention are a different steel sheet from the steel sheet of the '281 patent. In addition, the present invention does not contain Co as an indispensable element.

Further, according to the present invention, the amounts of B, Mn and Al must be selected by Fig. 2 and the Expression (2) for improving chemical converted coating treatment. On the other hand, in the '281 patent, the retained austenite definitely remains in the steel when B is added.

Therefore, the '281 patent cannot produce the same steel sheet of the present invention.

JP 2000-345288 ('288 patent)

The technology disclosed in the '288 patent relates to a high strength steel sheet excellent in formability and weldability, where the microstructure is composed of martensite containing ferrite and retained austenite, which is different steel sheet of the present invention. Further, the '288 patent does not contain Ti and Nb as indispensable elements, which is also different from the steel sheet of the present invention. In addition, the '288 patent does not teach or suggest chemical converted coating treatment.

It is therefore submitted that amended independent claim 1, and all claims dependent thereof, are patentenable over Japan No. 2001-234281 and/or Japan No. 2000-345288.

Information Disclosure Statement

The references of the Information Disclosure Statement filed January 26, 2007 are being resubmitted with an Information Disclosure Statement filed herewith.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that in view of the present amendment and foregoing remarks, the application is now in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application, as amended, be allowed and passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: *May 19, 2008*

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